The ‘biggest ever’ Prolight + Sound Middle East opens at DWTC

AUDIO VIDEO LIGHTING

15 Oct 2019

UAE: In the run up to the fourth iteration of Prolight + Sound Middle East, organisers were billing the show as the ‘biggest yet’ with 55 exhibitors, 180 brands, an extensive conference programme, free-to-attend workshops and a new Sample Music Festival area. Nevertheless, the exhibition footprint remained, as in previous years, in just one hall of the DWTC where despite a few noticeable omissions, attendees saw a number of new faces as well as the more familiar ones.



Kevin Boujikian of ProvisionAVL with Ramon Oolthuis of Admiral Staging

The UAE has seen a number of new players and shifts of representation in the distribution market this year and Masterpiece was taking the opportunity to fly the flag as Harman’s new distributor with a spacious island booth. Over by the entrance, SGTC Pro staff were kept busy on the FBT stand. ‘I’ve been pleasantly surprised by how much traffic we’ve seen today,’ stated SGTC divisional manager, Rohit Dhar, in front of a display of Horizon speakers and the Vertus CLA column range.

If there was a competition for exhibition attendance, then Venuetech was surely the gold medal winner. Barely having packed up its stand from GITEX the previous week, the distributor had headed to the JOY forum in Saudi Arabia. Returning to Dubai, it created an impact with one of the largest booths on the PL+S ME floor, showcasing French loudspeaker brands Active Audio and APG, in addition to Sennheiser, Elation and SGM, while simultaneously manning an equally large stand over in one of the Light Middle East halls.

While Venuetech has been a regular sight at the show, Finnish loudspeaker manufacturer Aura Audio was exhibiting for the first time. ‘There is an expectation here and there are lots of construction projects happening,’ explained managing director Mika Isotalo. ‘We’ve been looking at new markets so it was a good opportunity to come here and introduce ourselves.’



One of the panel discussions taking place throughout the show

One of the elements that the organisers received plaudits for in 2018 was the quality of the seminar programme and speakers it delivered, and in 2019, they had worked equally hard. Kieran Walsh from Audinate was once again presenting the Dante certification workshop, this year entitled *Audio over IP in a busy multi-facility complex: Challenges and solutions as networks evolve*.

Harman was conducting lengthy workshops each day over in Hall 2 under the Harman University banner, the first of which, *AV Design for Modern Meeting Spaces,* was led by video applications engineering manager Adam Findlay to a packed seminar area. ‘Last year we sat down and analysed the feedback and a lot of the visitors asked us to do something more with education,’ explained Stefan Wieland, Harman’s



Adam Findlay from Harman Professional Solutions leading one of three workshops at PL+S ME

regional business development manager for the Middle East. 'So this year, Harman University has been running courses for free, they're product neutral and an opportunity for people to elevate their experience and skill level and it's a great way for people to get more involved with education.'

Talk on the show floor inevitably touched on Expo 2020, which kicks off next October, so it was perhaps no surprise to learn that PL+S ME won't take place at the same time in 2020 and will return in January 2021. For this year though Prolight + Sound Middle East continues through until Thursday 17 October in Hall 4 at the DWTC.

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